

Historic, Archive Document

Do not assume content reflects current scientific knowledge, policies, or practices.

A46
Ex8

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
LIBRARY



BOOK NUMBER
873167

A46
Ex8

873167
FACTS ABOUT LEAN-TYPE HOGS 1/

Lard presently sells for less than the price of live hogs. Consumers are demanding leaner pork. This leaner pork must be produced on the farm. The two methods of producing leaner pork are by modifying the feeding and the breeding practices.

Feeding

Feeding from 80 to 90 percent of a full fed ration will make market hogs leaner. This will also increase the efficiency of gains, but will reduce the daily gain. This practice is limited in usefulness, because of the labor involved.

Limiting energy consumption by the use of larger than usual amounts of alfalfa hay or oats and even by using ground corn cobs in the feed will achieve the same results.

Whether these methods might be useful will depend on the farmer and his customary methods of feeding and management.

Breeding

Breeding methods offer a rapid and permanent means of producing good-doing lean hogs for all farmers.

The first need in a modified breeding system is some means of identification of superior animals. The tools useful in this identification are (1) records; (2) scales; (3) backfat measurements.

Any farmer can and should be encouraged to keep records.

If scales are available the pigs can be weighed at a given age to get a check on growth rate.

Backfat can be measured on the live hog. This measurement is taken by making a small slit in the skin, and measuring the backfat with a small metal ruler. The measurement is taken at three places, each about 1-1 1/2 inches off the middle line of the hog's back. The three places are: (1) just behind the shoulder; (2) at the middle of the back; (3) over the loin. If these three measurements are taken at the same weight for all hogs they show which hog is the leanest. If the measurements are taken at varying weights they can be adjusted to an equal weight basis for comparing hogs. For those producing boars, it must be pointed out that a boar at the same weight as his barrow brothers will have somewhat less backfat thickness. Boars must be compared with each other and not with gilts and barrows.

1/ Prepared by John Zeller, Head, Swine Section, Animal and Poultry Husbandry Research Branch, Agricultural Research Service, United States Department of Agriculture, Agricultural Research Center, Beltsville, Md.

Selecting the leanest hogs for breeding will rapidly change the quality of hogs being produced, since fatness is a highly heritable characteristic.

Suggested plans for Purebred and Commercial herds are as follows:

1. Purebred

- a. Select best boars and gilts by use of records on prolificacy, growth rate and backfat thickness.
- b. Use the best ones in the breeding herd.
- c. Sell the other good boars and gilts.
- d. Castrate poor boars and sell as slaughter hogs. Sell poor gilts for slaughter.
- e. Re-use boars which consistently sire outstanding pigs.

2. Commercial

- a. Select best gilts by use of records on prolificacy, growth rate and backfat thickness.
- b. Buy boars from breeders who are selecting for those characteristics. Insist on seeing records, and don't buy culls.

REMEMBER:

1. The number of pigs raised is important in a profitable hog program.
2. Efficient hogs return the most profit for the feed.
3. Consumer want lean pork.
4. Efficient, lean hogs can be produced.



